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SUBJECT: PRT BAMYAN: GOVERNMENT CONTINUES JOURNEY TOWARDS  
ACCOUNTABILITY WITH SECOND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

REF: 05 KABUL 5268

Summary

1. (SBU) The Governor's office organized and hosted a NZAID funded two-day conference September 18-19 that outlined ongoing development activity in Bamyan. While all of the nine sector working groups of the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) provided substantive presentations, some of the sectors, such as justice, are clearly less active and needier than the others. Participants appreciated the conference information, and did not hesitate to outline a litany of infrastructure needs. The Governor hopes to hold this conference semi-annually to keep the public informed about province-wide activities. End Summary.

The Basics

2. (U) Governor Habiba Sarabi hosted a Conference September 18-19, on Bamyan development activities, which was primarily funded through the PRT by NZAid, with supplemental funds from Food and Agriculture Organization, Aga Khan Development Network and DIAG. The Governor invited all of the six district sub-governors, police chiefs, select community representatives, the Provincial Council, the Wolesi Jirga members, press, and the international assistance community to hear and discuss the activities of the nine sector working groups of the PDC since the last conference in December 2005 (Reftel) and for the coming six months.

3. (U) Over 200 participants questioned government officials after each presentation on progress in the following sectors: education, communications, health, social services, agriculture, finance and trade, energy and water, security and justice, and transportation. Department directors provided slideshow presentations (prepared with considerable donor assistance over the last month) to the participants explaining: 1) accomplishments and projects undertaken in the last nine months; 2) what gaps exist in their sector; and 3) what they hope to achieve in the next six months. Wolesi Jirga member Akbari from the Waras District, NDS Director General Waziq, and Provincial Council Chairman Etamadi also spoke briefly.

## Participants Welcome Details and Pull No Punches

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¶4. (U) Participants expressed general satisfaction that the government held such an event on development activities. They also rose to the challenge of holding accountable any and all sector directors that they felt were not doing enough within the province. Public participants and the district sub-governors outlined a litany of needs (particularly roads, wells and tents for schools) over the two-day conference. While all nine sectors provided substantive presentations for the public and were rigorously questioned, Public Health, Justice and the NDS segments are highlighted here due to the nature of the issues they raised.

### Public Health - Making Headway

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¶5. (U) Considered one of the most professional directors by his peers, Public Health Director Dr. Shahir provided details on a plethora of projects in his sector. He highlighted the work of the Bamyan Provincial Hospital which sees approximately 150-180 patients and performs 3-5 surgeries per day. It is staffed by 12 doctors and 30 nurses. Since basic hygiene training is a priority, they have offered basic training to 667 individuals in this field. Shahir is now working on creating a nursing program at the hospital, which should commence by the end of this year. As well, according to Shahir, the Japanese Embassy will provide 150 beds for the hospital. Touching upon the critical issue of pregnancy care within the province, he mentioned the ongoing training at the nearby midwife school, funded by USAID, which will help

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address the need for trained midwives in remote/underserved areas of this province. (Note: Bamyan has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Afghanistan. End Note) District-wide he mentioned the four recent vaccine campaigns against measles, hepatitis B, rabies and tetanus. He concluded his presentation by referencing three key weaknesses in the health field - currently the hospital is not able to provide dental or psychological treatment for those in need, nor are there enough community health workers to service the entire province in his opinion.

### Justice - 75 Percent Understaffed

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¶6. (SBU) As at the first conference, the participants had many questions for Chief of Police Sayeed Akbar and Chief Prosecutor Azizullah Hadaftand during the security and justice segment. Among other concerns, the public asked about the lack of district judges and prison officials and what Hadaftand was doing to address the situation. According to Hadaftand, there are no district judges in four (Punjab, Waras, Khamard and Sayghan) of the seven districts and his office is 75 percent understaffed. This problem exists across the country, however, and can be attributed to the poor salaries offered to prosecutors. With respect to the prison officials, he indicated that an ordinary ANP officer receives 3500 afgani (70 USD) per month while a prison guard only earns around 800 afgani (16 USD) per month.

### NDS Makes Plea for Public Assistance

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¶7. (SBU) While not part of the formal agenda, National Directorate of Security (NDS) General Waziq made a brief, impassioned pitch at the end of the conference for the assistance of the public in order to keep the province safe in the future. Waziq stated, &We've heard of anti-government forces coming to the province as well as the possibility that they are active in Bamyan. He indicated that both the police and NDS need the public's assistance if they are to combat this problem. (Note: This was a

dramatically different approach than the one taken by former Police Chief Wahadat at the December conference where he painted a fantastic picture of security and stability in the Province, claiming no armed groups operated in Bamyan (reftel). End Note)

#### Conference Objectives Achieved

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¶8. (SBU) While Governor Sarabi and Provincial Council Chairman Etamadi both publicly chided two Directors (Public Works and Rural Reconstruction and Development) for providing insufficient details in their presentations, on the whole Sarabi and the international assistance community were pleased with the preparation of the directors and their presentations. As an added bonus, over the last month the directors have substantially strengthened their working relationships with their international assistance partners. These directors are now reaching out more frequently for information on all of the myriad activities occurring in their sectors and some have taken the next step and begun to monitor these activities more closely.

Comment: Slowly Building Capacity

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¶9. (SBU) The Governor's key goals for this development conference (public dissemination of government activities and goading less-active offices into action) were achieved. According to NGO officials present at both conferences, all of the sectors have come a long way since the last conference in responding to the concerns of the public. A lot of work remains, however, especially in the area of strategic planning for the future. Due to the lack of legal training and staff, the justice sector is probably one of the neediest sectors within the province. To help address this weakness, the PRT would welcome a program such as the Provincial

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Judicial Council (PJC), which could provide a welcome capacity boost to the few judicial officials in the province.

¶10. (SBU) We believe this regular conference is, and will continue to be, a very worthwhile endeavor. We will be looking at ways to ensure there is a follow-up conference held in six months, time.  
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